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LETTER DATED 8 JUNE 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF LIBERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to forward herewith the text of the statement issued by the Cabinet of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia, on the Harbel area massacre of civilians by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) on 6 June 1993.

I should be grateful were you to have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) William BULL
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement by the Cabinet of the Interim Government of National
Unity on the Harbel area massacre of civilians by the National
Patriotic Front of Liberia, issued following two extraordinary
sessions of the Cabinet on 7-8 June 1993

In the early hours of Sunday, 6 June 1993, nearly 300 Liberians, mainly displaced men, women, children and the elderly, were massacred and more than 700 wounded in an attack by armed men in the Harbel area.

Survivors and security investigations have since established that this gruesome and tragic act of terrorism, which has shocked not only the entire Liberian nation but the international community as a whole, was carried out by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

Deeply moved by this heinous act of barbarism, the Cabinet met in extraordinary sessions yesterday and today (7 and 8 June), to deliberate on the Government's response. After examining the facts and the circumstances of the horror, the Cabinet concluded that Charles Taylor and NPFL must bear full responsibility for the slaughter.

The Government therefore condemns Charles Taylor and NPFL in the strongest terms for their act of savagery, and wishes to dissociate the Liberian people from such an inhumane, brutal and senseless destruction of lives.

The Government notes that this latest action by Charles Taylor and his men confirms beyond all doubts that Charles Taylor and his NPFL are committed to a pattern of atrocities designed to create terror in the people of Liberia.

This pattern of savagery has brought in its wake, among other actions by NPFL, the taking and holding hostage of civilians and members of the West African Peace-keeping Force (ECOMOG); the use of civilian hostages as human shields; the bloody and reckless attack on civilians during the so-called Operation Octopus launched by NPFL in October last year; the indiscriminate launching of rockets and other dangerous missiles on residential areas during this period; the brutal killing of four American nuns; and the cold-blooded murder of ECOMOG peace-keepers, including six Senegalese soldiers.

This latest NPFL atrocity convinces the Government and our people that NPFL has embarked on a strategy that increases the gravity of violent crimes that the Front continues to commit.

The Government also notes that this incremental nature of the implementation of NPFL's terroristic designs is in line with Charles Taylor's recent radio directive to his fighters, which was intercepted by ECOMOG.

This directive calls on NPFL forces to unleash a reign of terror against the Liberian people, especially those in displaced centres. Indeed, the Harbel area massacre shows that NPFL forces are actively carrying out the directive of their leader.

The Government recalls that it was in fulfilment of Charles Taylor's reign of terror that the nation recently witnessed similar massacres and burning of villages in Fassama, in Lofa County, where dozens of our people were killed in cold blood by NPFL; and in Yamah Town in Margibi and Bernard Farm, where dozens more innocent civilians were massacred and their homes destroyed.

The Government, in the face of this pattern of atrocities, hereby declares Charles Taylor a terrorist, and his organization, the so-called National Patriotic Front of Liberia, a terrorist organization.

The Government further declares that it will accordingly treat Taylor and his NPFL as such until Taylor demonstrates a firm commitment to the peace process and respect for fundamental human rights and democratic principles and until he and his organization show clear indications that they are prepared to submit to the norms of civilized behaviour.

In this regard, the Government urges the international community to join the Government and people of Liberia in taking all necessary measures that will isolate and ostracize Charles Taylor and his NPFL.

As the people of Liberia absorb the shock of the Harbel area massacre, the Government wishes to express profound condolences to the bereaved families. As a mark of respect for our fallen brothers, sisters, mothers and children, the Government further declares Friday, 11 June, a day of national mourning, to be observed as a public holiday throughout the country.

Accordingly, the Government is calling on all churches and mosques, and other places of worship, to toll their bells at 12 noon on that day, and offer prayers for the souls of the victims.

In the meantime, in order to protect the civilian population, especially those in displaced centres, the Government has already embarked on a set of security measures.

In this respect, the Government urges all our people to cooperate in the implementation of these security exercises. Meanwhile, the Government calls upon our people to continue organizing community-based groups that will assist in bolstering security measures being taken by the Government.

The Government wishes to assure all our people that it will not relent in ensuring that NPFL's terroristic actions against our people are quickly brought to an end; and the peace process kept on course. To this the interim Government of National Unity remains committed until comprehensive disarmament is achieved as required by the Yamoussoukro Accord.
